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GENERAL NOTES.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

ASIA.—*The Island of Formosa*.—A paper recently read by Mr. M. Beazeley, before the Royal Geographical Society, gave much information about this little-known island, and elicited more from other members. The Chinese do not seem to have been acquainted with the island until 1403, although it is distinctly visible from the mainland and islands of the Chinese coast. So little did the Chinese emperors know or care about it, that in 1624 they ceded it to the Dutch in exchange for the small group of the Pescadores. Previously to this the Spanish and Portuguese had traded there, and it is supposed that the curious red brick fort at Tamsui, now the British consulate, was built by the Spaniards in the 16th century. The Dutch drove the Japanese from Anping, fortified themselves in Fort Zelandia, and held the island until they were driven out by the celebrated piratical chieftain, Ching Ching-kung, whose grandson handed the island over to the Chinese government, and received his pardon.

Formosa strait, between the island and the mainland, is 245 miles wide at its southern end, but only $62\frac{1}{2}$ at its northern end. The island is 245 miles in greatest length, and 76 in greatest width, and is computed to contain 14,982 square miles. A range of mountains, averaging about 12,000 feet in height, extends down the center of the island for the greater part of its length. The ridge of this range is extremely level, though heights varying from 11,300 to 12,850 feet have been made out. Mr. Beazeley declares them to be wooded to the very top, but Mr. Barber states that he has seen snow on the northern parts of the range late in June. There are now no good harbors in Formosa, owing to the fact that the island is rising at quite a perceptible rate. During the Dutch occupation in the 17th century the capital, Taiwanfu, was a port, Fort Zealandia was an island far out to sea, and an extensive harbor and bay separated the two. This is now a level plain of many miles in extent, and passengers are landed in catamarans at Anping, under the ruins of the old fort. Anping is merely an open roadstead with no shelter in the south-west monsoon, during which no vessels visit it. Tamsui, in the north, is at the mouth of a river, with only $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms on the bar, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms inside, with bad holding-ground. Kelung, also in the north, is very small and much exposed during the north-east monsoon. Takow, in the south-west, twenty-four miles south of Anping, has a shifting bar and a very narrow entrance, while only the outer end of the lagoon affords anchorage. There is a small harbor at Sao bay on the east coast. The neighboring small group of the Pescadores has two fine harbors, Ponghou and Makung, and it would be absolutely necessary for any foreign

¹ This department is edited by W. N. LOCKINGTON, Philadelphia.

power that wished to hold Formosa to possess these harbors. At present Amoy is practically the port of Formosa, and the produce of the island is sent thither in small vessels. There are no active volcanoes in the island, but there are signs of volcanic action in boiling springs, etc., and earthquakes are frequent.

When Mr. Beazeley accompanied a party in 1875 to select a site for a lighthouse at the South cape, Chinese authority had not extended so far as it now has, and it was not without much difficulty and some danger that the travelers made their way from Takow to the cape. The Chinese inhabitants of the country are described as apparently well-to-do, the villages clean and the children, who are mostly naked, healthy and strong. The mangoes grown in Formosa closely resemble the Bombay mango in appearance and flavor, and the pineapples are without a crown of leaves. The aborigines are much darker and more muscular than the Chinese, wear nothing but a scanty blue cloth round the waist, and are armed with bows and arrows and long knives. Many carry matchlocks. In shape Formosa has been compared to a cleaver with a short handle, or to a fish, the tail or handle being the narrow part just north of the South cape. It is certainly one of the most beautiful and fertile spots on the face of the earth.

Northern Afghanistan.—The northern part of Afghanistan is watered by the Heri-rud, Murghab and affluents of the Amu-Daria, and thus belongs to the Aralo-Caspian basin. The Afghans do not extend beyond the mountains (Hindoo Koosh, Parapomismus, etc.) except in the north-west at Herat, though they hold in military subjection the Mongol tribes of the lowland areas. The Hazareh, etc. (Mongolian) of the mountains east and south-east of Herat are independent, and the region between the Murghab and Heri-rud is occupied by Turkoman tribes, among whom are about 30,000 who have recently come southward from Merv. Eastward of these Turanian tribes are various peoples of Iranian race, some of whom are thought to be the aboriginal inhabitants of this mountain land—the supposed cradle of the Aryan stock. Among these are the Black Kafirs or Siah-posh, who alone of these tribes have not embraced Mohammedanism, who use tables and chairs and into whose country an Afghan dare not penetrate. North of these are the Badakshi. The Russians claim that the Hindoo Koosh forms the northern limit of Afghanistan, but north of this line, at its eastern extremity, Aryan tribes extend even to Darwaz and Karateghin.

Asiatic Notes.—Two hundred and fifty representatives of the Hsi-Fans, or tributary aboriginal tribes of Thibetan race which live scattered along the Thibetan border of China from Yunnan to Kan-su, are now in Pekin. The Hsi-Fans are short, fond of red clothing, and adopt Chinese fashions in no small degree. Their faces are rounder than those of the Chinese, their heads

smaller, their noses less stunted, small and pointed. Their eyes are small, placed in a line, and have a bright black luster. Quiet though they are now, history shows that they struggled manfully against the Chinese. The Lolos of Sze-Chuan are allied to the Burmese, and seem to form a nation. Both they and the Hsi-Fans belong to the Eastern Himalaic, while the rest of the aboriginal tribes in Western China and in the southern provinces, whether Miao, Rao or Tung, seem to belong to the Eastern Himalaic, the branch to which belong the Siamese, Shans, Laos, the Li of Hainan, the Cambodians and the Anamese.—Dr. Grishimailo's travels in Ferghana and the Altai have resulted in large geological and entomological collections, as well as in much anthropological matter. Many evidences of the existence of a glacial epoch in Central Asia were met with, amongst them the presence in Thian-shan of forms which have hitherto only been found in Labrador, Greenland, Lapland and the Swiss Alps.—M. Ed. Cotteau has ascended several of the Javan volcanoes, viz., Mt. Cheda, 9844 feet; Mt. Merapi, 9459 feet; Mt. Bromo, 8203 feet, and still active; and Mt. Smeru, 12,469 feet high, the culminating peak of Java. M. Cotteau states that to one accustomed to Swiss mountain-climbing the ascent of these volcanoes is child's play.

AFRICA.—*African Notes*.—M. Dolisie, a member of the Brazza mission, has traveled from Loango to Brazzaville. The "king" of the country gave to the traveler an excellent piece of ground at the confluence of the Ludima with the Kuilu, and had signed a treaty placing all the country between the Ludima and the Niari under the protectorate of France. This prince and all his chiefs also signed a solemn declaration that they had never ceded any of their rights to the International Society, which did not even own the land on which their stations were built. The route was preferable to that of the Congo and even to that of the Ogowé. Both the entrances of this route on the coast of Loango and its termination at Brazzaville are in the hands of France.—M. Giraud has again been unsuccessful in his attempt to continue his explorations, having been abandoned by his porters and his escort.—The French have the command of the Niger from Bourré to Boussa, some 700 leagues of watercourse. From the north of Africa a French railway runs from Arzen to Méchéria, and in a few years will be extended to Imsalah, which is already connected with Timbuctoo by caravan routes. The latter will become more important under French protection. The French will certainly also push from Porto Novo on the Gulf of Guinea to Boussa on the Niger, and thus complete their communication between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Guinea.—Dr. Colin, of the French navy, has recently explored the valley of the Faléme, one of the most considerable affluents of the Senegal. The river, though it cannot be considered navigable, can be made so by removing a few rocks which obstruct its pas-

sage. Small canoes ascend it even now, and it could easily be made accessible to small steamers, since it has neither falls nor rapids. Life is intense throughout the valley, the vegetation for from one to three hundred meters on each bank is so thick that it was only at intervals that our traveler could approach the river; elephants, lions, buffaloes, antelopes, etc., as well as birds abound, and numerous villages are situated within a few kilometers of its course. Gold is found in its sands. Leaving Podor June 24, 1883, he left the Faléme at Senondébau, an abandoned French fort, and proceeded thence to Dialafara, the capital of Tambura, a country rich in cattle and gold, and induced the sovereign to sign a treaty of protectorate. From Dialafara Dr. Colin went to Kassama, capital of Diébedugu, a city before unknown to Europeans. Kassama seemed so important that Dr. Colin endeavored to find a practicable route from thence to the terminus of the French railway at Bafulabé, but failed.—M. Tomczek, the companion of M. Rogovinski in the exploration of the Cameroons region, died at Mondoleh, May 10, 1884, aged 24 years. Notwithstanding his youth, he had got together a vocabulary of the Kruman language, explored the Rio del Rey, and taken many notes upon the country.—Not only M. Rogovinski, but M. Passavant of Basle, has resolved to advance into the interior of the Cameroons region in search of the mysterious Lake Liba.—In his last journey Mr. Stanley ascended the Aruwimi to Tambuga, $2^{\circ} 43'$ N. lat. At that point the river is called Biyere, farther on it is the Berre and the Werré, and Mr. Stanley believes it to be identical with the Welle of the south of the Soudan. He discovered on this journey the Lulemgu, an important affluent upon the right bank, and established a station upon the island of Wana-Rusani, near the right bank of the river, in $0^{\circ} 10'$ N. lat.

AMERICA.—*Norse and Portuguese Colonies in North America.*—Mr. R. G. Haliburton (Proc. Roy. Geog. Society, January, 1885) identifies the "Vinland the Good" of Eric the Red with Newfoundland. The length of the day given in the Greenland Saga coincides with that of Newfoundland, and the man who called his first find Greenland in order to attract colonists, would not scruple to give a good name to the land found by his son, Leif. Wild grapes are said to occur on the west coast, and this was enough for Eric to magnify into shiploads of grapes and a semi-tropical winter climate. The Helluland of the Saga is, by Mr. Haliburton identified with Labrador, the southern part of which was Markland, while Genunga gap was Belle Isle strait. It was not known until the publication, in 1883, of "Os Corte Raes," by Senhor Ernesto do Canto, that from 1500 to 1579 commissions were regularly issued to the Corte Reals as governors of Terra Nova, and that at least three settlements were made by the Portuguese. Except, perhaps, the Vinland of the Norsemen, this colony, which included Labrador, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia

and probably a large portion of the east coast of the United States, was by far the oldest European colony in the new world, since the date 1500 is but two years after the discovery of America by Columbus and six years after its discovery by Cabot. In 1500 Gaspar Corte Real explored Labrador, probably nearly to Hudson strait, and also Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. In 1521 Fagundes obtained a grant of the country between the land of the Corte Reals (Newfoundland) and the Spanish colonies, and a settlement was made at Cape Breton. Traditions of this settlement exist among the Micmacs, who aver that certain earth-mounds at St. Peter's, Cape Breton, were made by white men before the French came. An archaic cannon, formed of bars of iron, was found many years ago, and an inquiry into the date of the manufacture of such guns showed that it must have been made between 1500 and 1545. Terra Nova was not actually settled, but the fisheries were actively prosecuted. The fate of this colony is not known, but in 1567 a Portuguese settlement was made at Inganish, Cape Breton. In 1580 the annexation of Portugal to Spain brought the region under Spanish authority, and a colony was sent out which appears to have had a melancholy end, since our only account of it is that the French convicts left on Sable island in 1598 built barracks to protect themselves out of the wrecks of the Spanish vessels. The name of "Spanish Harbor" is all that marks their passage. Few persons imagine that the Bay of Fundy is "*Baya Fonda*," the deep bay, and that Cape Race is "Cabo Raso," or bare cape, names given by the Portuguese.

Source of the Mississippi.—The true source of the Mississippi was found by Captain Glazier to be in a lake in lat. $47^{\circ} 13' 25''$, and situated three feet above Lake Itasca, the hitherto supposed source of the river. The source is therefore 1578 feet above the Atlantic, and the length of the river, taking former data as the basis, may be placed at 3184 miles.

The Fuegians.—The total population of Terra del Fuego is not above 8000, consisting of about 2000 Onas, hunters, evidently of Tehuelch or Patagonian origin, in the east; about 3000 Alaculufs, hunters and fishers in the west and 3000 Yahgans, fishers, in the south. Numerous kitchen-middens of vast size and great age show that the island was inhabited even before the opening of Magellan straits. Those of Elizabeth island, the largest, oldest and most interesting, are from twenty to twenty-five feet above the sea-level, and are covered with a layer of fine sea-sand some forty-five inches thick, above which comes an accumulation of rich vegetable humus overgrown with herbaceous vegetation. The lower stratum of refuse contains *Mytilus patagonius* and other shells, with fragments of *Otaria jubata* and a few other mammals, but no split bones, human remains, traces of pottery or weapons, save a few rudely-shaped spear or arrow-heads. The modern heaps are very similar. In

the face of the great degradation of these peoples the English missionaries assert the language of the Yahgans contains no less than 30,000 words, "suggesting the hypothesis of an origin very different and far superior to their present state."

GEOLOGY AND PALÆONTOLOGY.

THE OLDEST TERTIARY MAMMALIA.—The lowest horizon of the Puerco epoch of New Mexico has recently been explored by David Baldwin with good results. The following is a list of the species of Mammalia obtained by him. The proportion of novelty, it will be seen, is large:

Polymastodon ? taoënsis Cope.

Polymastodon latimolis, sp. nov.—This marsupial equals the *P. taoënsis* in size, and is therefore larger than either the *P. fissidens* or the *P. foliatus*. It differs especially from both the *P. taoënsis* and the *P. foliatus* in the great shortness of the first true inferior molar, which is only one-half longer than the second or last true molar. The latter is as wide as long in the type, and a little narrower in a second specimen. It supports four tubercles on the inner side; outer side worn. The first true molar appears to have five tubercles on the inner side, although the anterior edge is injured. In *P. taoënsis* there are six or seven. The fourth premolar is two-rooted. The enamel of the last inferior molar is faintly longitudinally wrinkled. The coronoid process rises opposite the middle of the second true molar.

Measurements: Total length of molar series, M. .038; of second true molar .017; width of do. .011; length of crown of second true molar .014; width of do. .011. Depth of ramus at M. II .038; do. at diastema .024. Depth of ramus of a second individual .042. Besides the shortness of the second true molar, the width of the same tooth and of the last true molar distinguish this species from the *P. taoënsis*. The inflection of the angle of the ramus of the lower jaw is as well marked as in other species of the genus.

Chriacus hyattianus, sp. nov.—Represented by two maxillary bones with molar teeth, one of which is accompanied by a broken mandibular ramus, which supports the second true molar and parts of other teeth. The superior molars are quite peculiar, and are especially characterized by their small transverse as compared with their anteroposterior diameter. The crowns are surrounded by a cingulum, except on the inner side, where distinct traces of it are visible. The external cusps are small and low and flattened on the external side, and are connected at their bases by a low ridge. They send inwards each an angular ridge which unites with its fellow in an angular internal cusp of little elevation, enclosing a triangular fossa. Small angular intermediate tubercles exist at the internal bases of the external cusps. The posterior cingulum is a little better developed than the anterior, and rises